

SEO Scholars

2025

**NATIONAL
IMPACT
REPORT**



60+ years of closing education gaps
The faces behind the numbers

www.seo-usa.org

SEO Scholars

SEO Scholars is an eight-year, tuition-free academic program that transforms motivated public high school students into college graduates — ensuring talented young people have the opportunity to get to and through the most competitive colleges in the country. We believe **talent is everywhere**, even when opportunity is not.

“ I went from barely paying attention to my grades in middle school to graduating as **high school valedictorian** — because SEO changed what I believed was possible for me.”



Doreen
SEO Scholars High School Class of 2021,
Emory University '25

Our **impact** at a glance

The impact of SEO Scholars is both measurable and transformative. Our outcomes show what happens when motivated students receive the academic preparation, mentorship, and guidance they deserve — **and how much your support helps them achieve.**

100% of Scholars are accepted into **four-year colleges**

85% of Scholars earn a Bachelor's degree, **compared to 20% of the same demographic nationally**

98% of Scholars were admitted to a **national top-100 college***

\$8.85M first-year **scholarships and grants awarded** to the 2025 High School Class

80% of Scholars are **first-generation** college graduates

*Based on U.S. News and World Report's rankings

“Regardless of our backgrounds, SEO reminded us everyday that **we are all capable of achieving something special as long as we work toward it.**”



Noah
SEO Scholars High School Class of 2025,
Boston University

The **SEO** Scholars story

SEO Scholars supports students from ninth grade through college graduation, providing year-round academic instruction, individualized advising, mentorship, and career preparation.

What started in New York City 63 years ago, now serves four locations nationally — **NYC, San Francisco, North Carolina, and Miami.**

The SEO Scholars model provides students with intensive academic preparation, wraparound guidance for eight continuous years, and a community of mentors who support students’ personal growth. Together, these elements create a proven pathway to success that leads to an **85% college graduation rate.**

Program overview

Building a foundation for college success

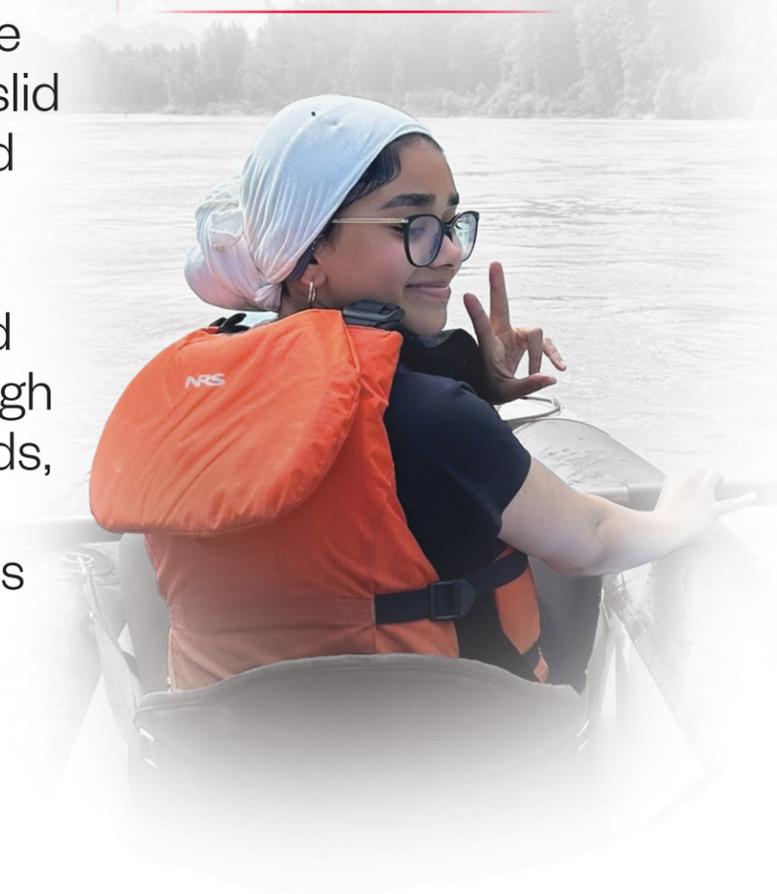
SEO High School Scholars receive nearly **700 hours** of additional instruction across four years — the equivalent of **2.5 years of ELA** and **1.5 years of math.** Through demanding coursework, weekend and summer instruction, and deep personal support, Scholars receive the kind of academic foundation and guidance that most public school systems — often overstretched and under-resourced — simply can’t provide.

“I stepped far outside my **comfort zone.** I slid down snow-covered mountains, swam in icy glacial waters, and soaked in every moment of **adventure.** I learned about Indigenous culture through weaving, tasting traditional foods, and hearing powerful stories, and I explored incredible places like Vancouver and Victoria.”

Suba
SEO Scholars Class of 2026
SEO Summer Enrichment Program

The High School Program:

- Saturday academy
- Weekday programming
- Academic advising
- Academic advising
- Summer enrichment
- Mentoring
- SAT/ACT prep
- College admissions support



Our **impact, innovation, and the lives we've changed** in 2025

2,600 SEO Scholars served in 2025

The **Senior Class** received **1,429** unique **college acceptances**

Nearly **700** **hours** of additional academic instruction during high school

16 SEO Scholars received prestigious **QuestBridge Scholarships** (full-ride scholarships)

2 were awarded **Posse Scholarships** (full-tuition scholarships)

3 are **Gates Scholars**

1 is a **UNCF Gray Scholar**

6 are **Albert Shanker Scholars**



Program overview

Supporting students all the way to and through graduation

1,500+

Scholars currently in college

180+

colleges and universities represented

30+

states across the country

The College Scholars Program:

College readiness workshops

One-on-one support

Career exploration & networking

Intensive career advising

Internships

“ SEO guided me from a first-generation student battling imposter syndrome to a neuroscience major on a full scholarship with research internships preparing me for medical school.”



Cristi
SEO Scholars High School Class of 2020,
Claremont McKenna College '24

National footprint

Across the country, SEO Scholars is transforming the lives of ambitious and dedicated students. Each location adapts the proven SEO model to meet local needs while maintaining the same academic rigor and outcomes.

SEO Scholars New York City

What we do in New York City

In New York City, where the program began, we continue to expand opportunities for young people who deserve access to rigorous academics, high expectations, and a community invested in their success. New York remains our largest and longest-running site, serving as a blueprint for what's possible.

207 school districts are represented

1,098 High School Scholars from the five boroughs

Why this work matters

Despite being the most diverse city in the country, fewer than half of New York City public school graduates are deemed “college-ready.” This is because access to rigorous coursework, individualized support, and college guidance remains deeply uneven throughout the boroughs.

For more than six decades, SEO Scholars New York City has stood on a simple belief: zip codes should not determine futures — and education can break the cycle of poverty.

“ Thanks to SEO, I now know that my voice is powerful, my perspective is unique, and my ideas matter. I am not alone.”



Anthony
SEO High School Scholars Class of 2023
University of Chicago

SEO Scholars San Francisco

What we do in the Bay Area

Founded in 2011, our San Francisco site was created to close the academic opportunity gap for students across the Bay Area, empowering them to access competitive colleges and graduate with strong career pathways ahead. This year saw:

650 High School Scholars in the San Francisco Bay Area

7 school districts and **40** different schools in the Bay area represented

70% of SF Scholars and their families paying **less than \$5,000** per year for college

Why this work matters

SEO Scholars San Francisco is expanding educational access for students who are often overlooked by traditional systems. With **nearly half of Scholars attending college tuition-free** and **most families contributing \$5,000 or less annually**, the SF program is proving what's possible when talent meets opportunity.



SEO Scholars North Carolina

What we do in North Carolina

Since launching in 2022 through a partnership with **shift_ed in Guilford County**, SEO Scholars North Carolina has expanded to serve students across surrounding communities, bringing our proven, eight-year academic program to a region where access to rigorous college preparation varies widely.

North Carolina was our first city to pilot a hybrid model allowing Scholars to participate in both **live and self-paced online learning**. This model, grounded in SEO's nationally recognized standards for academic rigor and student support, has been developed as a national adaptation of our in-person program.

Why this work matters

North Carolina's students are full of promise, but many face barriers that limit their access to high-quality academic preparation, college guidance, and early career exposure. For many Scholars, SEO is the first time they receive consistent, personalized academic support and a clear roadmap to college success.

175 High School Scholars in North Carolina



SEO Scholars Miami

What we do in Miami

Launched in early 2025, and guided by SEO's enduring commitment to educational equity, the program is building a proven pathway to college success for students who too often go unseen.

Why this work matters

In Miami-Dade, too many talented students face barriers that limit their access to rigorous academics, college guidance, and early career exposure. SEO Scholars Miami bridges that gap by providing the support, instruction, and mentorship students need to fulfill their potential and enter college with confidence and momentum.



65 High School Scholars from **16** public high schools in Miami-Dade County

75% will be **first-generation college students**

80% of all SEO Scholars are **first-generation college students**.

Sara

SEO Scholar High School Class of '24, Georgetown University

During the pandemic, as an anxious ninth grader on Zoom — and one of the very few students of color at my school — I felt incredibly isolated. I longed for a diverse community where I could feel confident in every part of my identity. Luckily, I was accepted to SEO Scholars. I could never have imagined the thriving, inclusive, loving and encouraging community I'd find. SEO's values of college education, equity, and community spoke to me, and I fell in love from the start.

Growing up with Sudanese immigrant parents facing a language barrier, I struggled to navigate school systems and often had fewer resources than my wealthier peers in New York. When my parents separated, I took on a whole new level of responsibility. My mother struggled financially and couldn't afford academic help for me and my two younger brothers, yet I still had high expectations for myself and wanted to pave the way for them.

SEO made that weight feel lighter.

Throughout the program, I made lifelong friends who shared similar experiences and helped me navigate challenges. SEO staff knew about my home situation and checked in on me, becoming a constant support system. I quickly adjusted to the hard work the program demands. I'd heard sayings like "show up and show out," "early is on time," and "late is unacceptable." All the extra hours only strengthened my commitment to my education.

SEO taught me the power of self-advocacy and standing up for what I believe in. I now have the confidence to bring attention to crises around the world that matter to me and to encourage others to help.

Thanks to SEO, I was admitted to the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, where I plan to major in Culture and Politics and pursue a career in social justice advocacy. I want to empower marginalized communities and advocate for their human rights and liberties.

Without SEO, I could never have imagined so many doors would've opened for me, or that I would have grown into someone with the discipline, courage, resilience, and sense of community that I have now.

SEO changed my life.



Your support drives real outcomes

- **Higher college graduation rates** for first-generation and low-income students
- **More Scholars served nationally** with year-round academic instruction, one-on-one advising, mentorship, and career support
- **Expansion into new cities and communities**, reaching students who need SEO's program the most

Help more students access the opportunities they deserve

Your support fuels the next chapter of this work, opening doors, increasing economic mobility, and strengthening communities for generations to come. When you give to SEO Scholars, you're not only changing one life; you're helping rewrite what's possible for entire families and futures.

Thank you.

Give today

The generosity of supporters like you has made all of the milestones our Scholars achieve possible. SEO is committed to being a responsible steward of your investment, earning top ratings from independent evaluators and ensuring that every dollar directly fuels enrichment, mentorship, and long-term success for motivated public high school students.



Charity Navigator:
Four-Star Rating (2011 - Present)



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